United Nations A/63/741

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 February 2009

Original: English

**Sixty-third session**
Agenda item 54
**Operational activities for development**

## Letter dated 30 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to your letter to me dated 20 January 2009, by which you entrusted me, in my capacity as the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, with undertaking the necessary consultations with Member States in accordance with, and for the purpose of implementing, General Assembly resolution 63/233, in particular to convene the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation.

In the resolution, the General Assembly requested the President of the Assembly to entrust the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation with undertaking the necessary consultations with Member States in order to prepare for the proposed Conference, with a view to the Assembly's taking a decision, during its sixty-third session, on the nature, date, objectives and modalities of the Conference, making use of the existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system.

I wish to inform you that I have undertaken consultations with Member States. Therefore, I am pleased to attach hereby my report on those consultations (see annex). I would highly appreciate your office making the necessary arrangements for the report to be brought to the attention of the General Assembly, for its consideration, at its sixty-third session.

(*Signed*) Nasser Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar
to the United Nations
President of the General Assembly High-level Committee
on South-South Cooperation

09-25040 (E) 110309

**Annex to the letter dated 30 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

# Report of the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation on the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

*Summary*

The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 63/233, in which the Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to entrust the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation with undertaking the necessary consultations with Member States in order to prepare for the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which, according to resolution 62/209, decided to convene no later than the first half of 2009, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. The report was prepared with a view to the Assembly's taking a decision, during its sixty-third session, on the nature, date, objectives and modalities of the Conference, making use of the existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system. The report summarizes the consultations undertaken by the President of the High-level Committee and provides the outcomes and recommendations of the consultations.

## Contents

| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 3 |
| II. | Consultations in preparation for the Conference | 4 |
| III. | Summary of the outcomes of the consultations | 4 |
| | A. Nature and objectives of the Conference | 4 |
| | B. Proposed theme and sub-themes for the Conference | 5 |
| | C. Venue and date of the Conference | 6 |
| | D. Modalities of the Conference | 6 |
| | E. Financing of the Conference | 6 |
| IV. | Preparations for and organization of the Conference | 7 |
| V. | Recommendation | 8 |

# I. Introduction

1. The 1978 United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries remains a pivotal event in South-South cooperation, and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries,[a] adopted by the Conference, has served to guide South-South cooperation policies and practices in the development sphere for the past 30 years. During this period, the international development scenario has been focused towards new horizons. It was in recognition of the changing nature of cooperation and capacities in the South, as well as the need to strengthen and further invigorate South-South cooperation, that the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, in resolution 62/209 of 19 December 2007, chose to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires conference with the convening of a High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. This proposal stemmed from the discussions and decisions of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its fifteenth session, in 2007, as endorsed by the Assembly at its sixty-second session later that same year.

2. The thirtieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action comes at a time when South-South cooperation has acquired greater prominence, thanks to the significant gains achieved in many parts of the developing world. Some countries of the South are now hubs of technological innovation, foreign direct investment and high-quality education. Despite these gains, however, there remain pockets where extreme poverty and lingering deprivation seem intractable. South-South cooperation with its emphasis on mutual learning and experience-sharing benefits in addition from the fact that partnering nations often share similar conditions or have previous experience of confronting similar challenges. This sharing of hard-won knowledge brings with it a deep sense of solidarity among countries of the South, which forms the philosophical basis for South-South cooperation, standing alongside other practical considerations.

3. In recognition of the above, the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/209 (para. 13) decided to convene a High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, no later than the first half of 2009, and requested that the President of the Assembly entrust the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation with undertaking the necessary consultations with Member States in order to prepare for the proposed conference, with a view to the Assembly's taking a decision, during its sixty-second session, on the nature, date, objectives and modalities of the conference, making use of the existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system.

4. In a letter dated 22 May 2008, the President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly requested the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation to undertake the necessary consultations in accordance with the above-mentioned Assembly resolution.

---

[a] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

5. The President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation submitted a report on the requested consultations (see A/C.2/63/7, annex I, attachment III). It considered the status of the consultations with Member States and provided a summary of the main conclusions and recommendations of the consultations, for review by the General Assembly.

6. Following deliberations at its sixty-third session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/233, in which it reiterated the request contained in resolution 62/209 (para. 13), with a view to its taking a decision at its sixty-third session.

7. In a letter dated 20 January 2009, the President of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly requested the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation to undertake the necessary consultations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/233. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request.

## II. Consultations in preparation for the Conference

8. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/233 and the aforementioned letter of the President of the sixty-third session of the Assembly, the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation undertook the necessary consultations with Member States in order to prepare for the Conference, with a view to:

(a) Determining the nature and scope, objectives, date and venue as well as the modalities for the Conference;

(b) Proposing the desired level of participation and organizational structure of the Conference;

(c) Coming up with an agreed list of priority issues and themes for consideration at the Conference;

(d) Determining the basic documents to be prepared by the Secretariat for the Conference;

(e) Making the necessary preliminary logistic arrangements with the Secretariat, using the existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system.

## III. Summary of the outcomes of the consultations

9. The main outcome of the consultations undertaken by the President of the High-level Committee and the proposed nature and objectives, themes, venue, date and modalities, as well as the necessary considerations, with respect to the holding of the Conference, are summarized below.

### A. Nature and objectives of the Conference

10. The Conference should assess progress made, reaffirm goals and commitments, share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives needed to overcome them and

important measures for further implementation as well as new challenges and emerging issues.

11. The Conference should be expected to provide an opportunity for policymakers to strategize on how best to tap into the rapidly growing capacities in the South and to harness the present momentum of South-South cooperation towards reaching internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, across the South. South-South cooperation offers policymakers and development practitioners a vital option to be considered in formulating national and regional development plans.

12. The Conference should be held at the ministerial, or similarly high, level, with the possible participation of Heads of State or Government, special representatives or other high-level representatives being encouraged.

13. Non-governmental organizations and business-sector entities should also be invited to participate in the Conference and its preparatory process, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the General Assembly, giving particular attention to the accreditation procedures and modalities of participation.

## B. Proposed theme and sub-themes for the Conference

14. The Conference should provide an opportunity to further clarify and distil the concept of South-South cooperation as an action-oriented modality through which to fight poverty and promote human development within the emerging world order, where developing countries are beginning to play major roles in areas such as trade, investment and finance. In this context, it is proposed that the Conference should have one overarching theme: "South-South cooperation for equitable development in the twenty-first century", with the following sub-themes:

(a) The changing landscape and dynamism in the global South and the role of South-South solidarity and cooperation towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[b] in order to engender a more inclusive globalization;

(b) South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, in the spheres of economic and sustainable development (for example, trade and investment; science and technology, especially information and communications technology; agriculture and food security; and environment and energy, including new and renewable sources of energy, as well as climate change, etc.);

(c) South-South development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, including triangular cooperation, in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly poverty eradication and achievement of full and productive employment, and disaster management;

(d) South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, in social and other areas (for example, education and culture; health and social services, especially with respect to HIV/AIDS and malaria; migration and remittances; tourism and the creative economy; gender empowerment; and the role of the media in development).

[b] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

## C. Venue and date of the Conference

15. Following the previous host country's withdrawal of its offer to host the Conference, there were informal indications of other possible offers to host the Conference. The President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation consulted with interested Member States and the Bureau of the Committee regarding which would serve as the host country. Following the consultations, the President of the Committee recommended that the General Assembly accept the kind offer of the Government of Kenya to host the Conference in Nairobi.

16. In order to allow adequate time for both the Secretariat and the host country to make all the necessary preparations so as to ensure the success of the Conference, and taking into account the calendar of other United Nations conferences and meetings scheduled in 2009, it is proposed that the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation be held in Nairobi, from 22 to 24 June 2009.

17. Bearing in mind the preceding paragraph, the General Assembly may wish to consider postponing the sixteenth session of the High-level Committee, currently scheduled to be held from 2 to 5 June 2009, until November 2009, and adjusting the duration of the High-level Committee session, as appropriate, in the light of the outcome of the High-level United Nations Conference.

## D. Modalities of the Conference

18. The Conference should include plenary meetings and a number of interactive multi-stakeholder round tables based on the overarching theme and the sub-themes proposed in paragraph 14 above.

19. The preparation and organization of the Conference should make full use of the existing institutional arrangements for reviewing the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

20. The General Assembly may wish to request that the President of the High-level Committee, on the basis of the consultations with Member States, propose a programme of work, taking into account relevant meetings scheduled for 2009 and their expected outcomes, including necessary consultations in the identified thematic areas.

## E. Financing of the Conference

21. In accordance with the relevant rules and practices established by the General Assembly for organizing similar events including the participation of all Member States, observers, and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations that have been accredited to participate in such events, as well as other relevant participants, the United Nations will normally cover, within available resources, those costs that would have been incurred if such an event had been held at United Nations Headquarters. These would normally entail the preparation of conference documents, including background documents; simultaneous

interpretations in all six working languages of the United Nations; and the salaries of translators, interpreters and a core of Secretariat staff directly associated to the preparation and organization of the Conference.

22. As it is a customary practice, the host Government would normally be expected to bear the costs of the Conference incurred as a result of its being held outside United Nations Headquarters. These would normally entail the provision of conference rooms and facilities; working spaces for the Conference secretariat and delegates, including computers and other office equipment; travel and daily subsistence allowances for interpreters and translators as well as the Secretariat's core support staff, at the prevailing standard United Nations rate; and local transportation for all participants from hotels to the Conference sites, as well as other related items, provided at the discretion of the host Government.

23. In order to ensure the broadest possible participation, especially by the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, all Member States and other relevant stakeholders in a position to do so should be encouraged to consider supporting the participation of these countries, including by making voluntary contributions through the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation.

## IV. Preparations for and organization of the Conference

24. It is proposed that the Secretariat should prepare a comprehensive report, consistent with the overarching theme of the Conference, highlighting the new dynamism and trends in South-South cooperation, and the progress that has been made by the international community in advancing such cooperation since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. Such a document should be presented in the form of a report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation. A concept paper should also be prepared for each of the sub-themes of the Conference. In addition, all Member States, as well as other participating partners, are encouraged to prepare their own national reports on South-South and triangular cooperation for submission to the Conference, on a voluntary basis.

25. All United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as funds and programmes, should provide their inputs towards preparation by the Secretariat of the various conference documents proposed in paragraph 24 above and assist the Secretariat in the organization of the main Conference as well as relevant thematic discussions, in coordination with the Secretariat. As necessary and appropriate, relevant bodies among them are also encouraged to organize regional, sectoral or theme-specific meetings prior to the Conference, at their own cost. In this connection, the President of the High-level Committee and/or his designated representative(s) may undertake necessary consultations with these bodies and entities.

26. To ensure the success of the Conference, it is further proposed that the President of the High-level Committee be assisted by an expanded Bureau of the High-level Committee, the designation of whose members should reflect equitable representation from among the regional groups within the United Nations, and whose main task would also include the preparation of a draft declaration and plan of action, based on consultations with all Member States and other relevant partners.

27. The Conference should result in an intergovernmentally agreed outcome, namely, the aforementioned declaration and plan of action. In this regard:

(a) There should be summaries of the plenary meetings and the round-table discussions, which should be included in the report of the Conference;

(b) Overall, the outcomes of the Conference should be concise, action-oriented and practical;

(c) The Conference should result in the provision of enhanced resources for the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation.

## V. Recommendation

28. The General Assembly may wish to endorse the proposed nature, date, objectives, modalities and organizational arrangements for the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation as described in the present report.